



**V&T Commission (VTC)
Request for Proposal (RFP)**

THIS IS NOT AN ORDER

ADVERTISED RFP VT1819-001

V&T Marketing/Public Relations/Communications

ISSUE DATE: February 23, 2018

RFP SUBMISSION DUE: March 16, 2018

FINALIST PRESENTATIONS: March 20, 2018

REPLY TO:

V&T Commission

c/o Chris Kipp, Operations Manager

Carson City Culture & Tourism Authority

716 N. Carson Street

Carson City, NV 89701

775-283-7682

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. A Selection Committee will evaluate the proposals submitted.
- 1.2. The Committee may call for oral interviews anticipated on March 20, 2018.
- 1.3. The VTC reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and use any idea in a proposal regardless of whether or not said proposal is selected.
- 1.4. During evaluation, the Selection Committee reserves the right, where it may serve the VTC's best interest, to request additional information or clarification from the Consulting Firm, or to allow corrections of errors or omissions. Oral interviews may be conducted by the Selection Committee for the Consultants who submit a Proposal and were short listed.
- 1.5. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the Consulting Firm of the conditions contained in this Request for Proposals, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the resultant contract between VTC and the Firm selected.
- 1.6. The use of the term "firm" refers to Consultant Firms with certified personnel, doing business in the United States and duly registered in the State of Nevada with business license.
- 1.7. There is no expressed or implied intent or obligation for VTC to reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals or any travel expenses during interviews in response to this Request for Proposals.
- 1.8. VTC shall reserve the right to terminate any agreement resultant from this solicitation and subsequent action for cause but not limited to inadequacy of performance.
- 1.9. VTC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to award to the proposer the VTC deems most qualified and whose award of the contract will accrue to the best interests of the VTC.
- 1.10. Until the receipt and opening of proposals, the proposers' principal contact with Carson City Culture and Tourism Authority c/o V&T Commission will be as listed below.

V&T Commission

c/o Chris Kipp, Operations Manager

Carson City Culture & Tourism Authority

716 N. Carson St., Suite 100 Carson City, NV 89701

e-mail: ckipp@visitcarsoncity.com

775-283-7682 FAX: 775-687-7416

- 1.11. All contacts regarding the proposal should be with the above-named individual only. Proposers contacting other VCT/CTA staff or VCT/CTA officials may be disqualified for doing so.

2. **OVERVIEW**

The Nevada Commission for the Reconstruction of the V&T Railway is seeking to retain the services of a contractor to direct and coordinate all V&T Marketing/Public Relations/Communications.

3. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In 1870, Nevada's first short-line railroad, the Virginia and Truckee Railroad (V&T), was completed between Carson City and Virginia City. Two years later, the track was extended to Reno to connect with the transcontinental Central Pacific Railroad. The V&T was the brain child of William Sharon, William Ralston, and D.O. Mills of the Bank of California in San Francisco. They feared that Adolf Sutro's plan to drain the Comstock mines of water through an ingenious tunnel would adversely affect the bank-held monopoly of mills along the Carson River. William Sharon petitioned the Nevada legislature and received funds to build the railroad. This calculated move stalled the tunnel's completion for many years. The line served to haul ore from Virginia City to the mills in Carson City, lumber from the Sierra Nevada, and passengers traveling between Virginia City, Carson City, Reno, and Minden (south of Carson City). The V&T operated from 1869 until 1950.

In 1972, Robert C. Gray, who was one of the passengers on the last train to Virginia City in 1938, sought to rebuild the V&T as a tourist line. After gaining approval from Storey Commission, reconstruction of the line began from F Street to the Eastern portal of Tunnel #4. The railroad's first operating season was 1976. Work continued on Tunnel #4 until it was reopened in the late 1980s. The Gray family continued to work on the line, and in 1991, reopened the part of the line between Virginia City and Gold Hill Station.

As early as 1993, interest in rebuilding the route beyond Gold Hill had been expressed by the State of Nevada. The state set up a commission to rebuild the line, known as the Nevada Commission for the Reconstruction of the V&T Railway.

Officials with the Commission held a "silver spike" ceremony January 3, 2006, in Carson City to commemorate the completion of two miles of track near Gold Hill. The construction, completed in September 2005, is part of an effort to restore the V&T's mainline from Virginia City to Carson City for operations. Then Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev), who was instrumental in securing \$10 million in federal funding for the project, and Nevada Lieutenant Governor Lorraine Hunt, who secured an additional \$1 million in state funding for the project, both spoke at the ceremony. On August 14, 2009 the ceremonial first run from Virginia City to Carson City Eastgate Station occurred for VIPs. On the 15th and 16th the line opened to the public.

Currently, the V&T Railway Commission has an independent contract with the Virginia Truckee Railroad to provide excursion services which include regularly scheduled steam and diesel trains, as well as special event trains like the Polar Express, all departing from the Eastgate depot in Carson City. This agreement also includes providing excursion services with passenger coaches in 19th century period appearance.

4. DURATION OF SERVICE

The resulting contract(s) shall be for an initial contract term of three (3) years, anticipated to begin April 1, 2018, subject to Commission approval, with an option to renew for three (3) additional years, if agreed upon by both parties and in the best interests of the Commission.

5. SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

- a. A copy of this RFP may be requested from the V&T Commission at the address shown in subsection (b) of this section, electronically at ckipp@visitcarsoncity.com, or by telephone at 775.283.7682.
- b. All proposals must be received by the V&T Commission no later than 2:00 p.m., March 16, 2018. Submit proposal in a **sealed envelope**, labeled **Submittal for RFP VT1819-001** to one of the following:

Mail/Delivery To:

V&T Commission
c/o CC Culture & Tourism Authority
Attn.: Chris Kipp
716 N. Carson St., Suite 100
Carson City, NV 89701

In-Person To:

Carson City Culture & Tourism Authority
716 N. Carson St., Suite 100
Carson City, NV 89701

- c. A master copy (so marked) of the Proposal and one electronic copy (Adobe Acrobat format saved onto a PC readable medium (flash drive), to include a title page showing the RFP subject; the firm's name, address, telephone number and email address of a contact person. The Proposal must be received on or before the date and time set for receipt of proposals. Proposals shall be clear, straightforward, and not exceed 30 pages in length not including company brochures. Company brochures may be provided.

Final Date for Submittal of Questions will be received through 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 2018. Questions shall be submitted in a letter format in writing via e-mail or mail and submitted to:

V&T Commission

c/o Chris Kipp, Operations Manager

Carson City Culture & Tourism Authority

716 N. Carson St., Suite 100 Carson City, NV 89701

e-mail: ckipp@visitcarsoncity.com

775-283-7682 FAX: 775-687-7416

- d. **LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** Prospective proposers are held responsible that their proposals arrive at the Carson City Culture and Tourism Authority on or before the designated time and date.
- e. All questions in the questionnaire must be completed. All requested documents must be provided.

6. EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

- a. The Commission shall use its best judgment in conducting a comparative assessment of the proposals.
- b. The Commission shall select finalists which possess the ability to service the Commission's needs. On-site visits may be scheduled with the finalists. The Commission may ask the finalists to travel to the Carson City, Nevada or Virginia City, Nevada to present further details and or respond to questions.
- c. One respondent will be selected following the presentations referenced above, and notifications will be sent to all firms submitting proposals.
- d. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the Contract at the end of each annual period by giving at least 60 days prior written notice, or to cancel with cause at any time.
- e. No oral explanation in regard to the meaning of the specifications will be made, and no oral interpretation will be given before the award of the Contract. If any firm contemplating submitting a bid for the Contract is in doubt as to the true meaning of any part of the specifications or any other proposed Contract documents, firm may submit to the Commission a written request for an interpretation thereof. The firm submitting the request will be responsible for its prompt delivery. Any interpretation of the proposed documents will be made by addendum duly issued or delivered to each firm receiving a set of such documents. The Commission will not be responsible for any other explanation or interpretations of the proposed documents.
- f. The Commission reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any informality in bids.

RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD will be made based on the evaluation results of the Selection Committee. Once the committee has made a recommendation and a contract is negotiated, the results will be posted on the V&T Commission website vtcommission.com and the CTA website visitcarsoncity.com/contracts.

FINAL SELECTION will be made by the VTC anticipated at the March 29, 2018 meeting. Should it become necessary to reschedule the date set for award, notice will be provided to those finalists selected. In all instances, a decision rendered by the VTC shall be deemed final.

Anticipated Schedule:

Release RFP	February 26, 2018
RFP Submittal Deadline	March 16, 2018
Firms Notified of Short List	March 19, 2018
Short List Interviews	March 20, 2018
Commission Awards RFP	March 29, 2018

7. RFP REQUIREMENTS

- a. Respondents should submit any information which documents successful and reliable experience in past performance similar to those of the requirements of this proposal.
- b. The above information may be shown on the enclosed questionnaire or in a similar manner.
- c. Must have experience working with a Board/Commission.
- d. Must have directly related experience developing and implementing strategic plans to promote a destination.

8. REQUIRED INFORMATION

The factors listed in this section will weigh heavily into the VTC’s decision making process on this project. These evaluation requirements are considered to be minimum requirements.

8.1.1 A Statement of Project Understanding

- a. Demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the specifications of the RFP.

8.1.2 Project Approach

- a. Proposal is organized and responsive to all requirements of the RFP, and proposer exhibits competence regarding the proposed scope. Proposer exhibits insightful approach to the scope of work. **8.1.2.1 SCOPE OF WORK: See Scope of Work Attachment**

8.1.3 Key Personnel Information:

- a. Key staff information (no more than one page resume per member).
- b. Relevant experience and abilities

8.1.4 Project Experience

- a. An example of a strategic plan that was created to promote a destination marketing campaign.

- b. An example where the use of technology and social media platforms were used to promote a destination marketing campaign.

All examples should include a brief project overview, budget and location.

- c. A minimum of 3 professional references and associated contact information.

9. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Having determined that a proposal meets the basic requirements, the Evaluation Committee will then evaluate it with respect to each of the following elements, total 100 points:

- 9.1 Qualifications (Maximum 40 points). The evaluation committee will consider; length of time in business, past performances in completing projects on time and within budget, previous projects similar in size and scope, apparent capabilities to perform well in the execution of its obligations under a contract as evidenced by its leadership and management personnel, size of organization, project manager and support staff, etc.
- 9.2 Staffing (Maximum 20 points). The evaluation committee will consider; proposer's staffing method of providing coverage in this contract with the different levels of staff proposed. Also taken into account will be the level of capabilities.
- 9.3 Technical (Maximum 40 points). The evaluation committee will review the RFP for its completeness and evaluate how the proposer will approach the task of initiating and fully implementing the scope of work, and demonstration of assurance of performance as to quality and efficiency will be weighted when scoring.

10. OBJECTION BY UNSUCCESSFUL PROPOSER:

- 10.1 Any unsuccessful Proposer may file an objection to the VTC regarding the selection of the VTC Review and Selection Committee by following the procedure outlined in paragraph below. Information on the results of the Committee's evaluation may be obtained upon request and will be emailed to each respondent.
- 10.2 Any objection shall be written and submitted to the V&T Commission c/o Carson City Culture & Tourism Authority within five (5) calendar days after a recommendation to accept or reject RFP have been posted to the Carson City Culture and Tourism Authority Website and V&T Commission Website. V&T Commission Selection Committee will stay any award actions until after the V&T Commission Selection Committee has responded in writing to the protest. If the appellant is not satisfied with the response, appellant may then protest to the V&T Commission Board, who will render a final decision. No protests will be heard by the Commission unless the proposer has followed the appeal process. VTC is not liable for any costs, expenses, attorney's fees, and loss of income or other damages sustained by the appellant in the process.

11. LIST OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 Nevada Business License
- 11.2 Proof of Insurance Coverage
- 11.3 Organizational chart for your firm
- 11.4 Resume Form: Complete a form for each person employed by or contracted with your firm which will assist with the completion of the scope of work for this contract.
- 11.5 Questionnaire Response: Provide a detailed narrative for each of the questions within the questionnaire. Responses must be formatted in Times New Roman, size 12 font. The responses to each question should be clearly labeled in accordance with the question which the narrative addresses. **11.5.1 QUESTIONNAIRE: See Questionnaire Attachment**

12. COST PROPOSAL

The cost proposal shall not be marked “confidential”. Only information that is deemed proprietary per NRS 333.020 (5) (a) may be marked as “confidential”.

Firms shall provide one (1) PDF Cost Proposal file that includes the following:

Section I – Title Page with the following information:

Section II – Cost Proposal

Firm’s cost proposal response shall be included in this section.

END OF DOCUMENT

11.5.1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Provide a detailed narrative for each question on the questionnaire below.

Note: Information contained in the bid process is public information after the Commission review process is completed.

1. General Information Regarding Your Firm

- a. Name of Firm
- b. Address of Firm
- c. Phone Numbers of Firm
- d. Owner of Firm
- e. Contact Person of Firm
- f. Is the Firm a subsidiary of a larger agency or associated with another agency? If yes, provide additional information.
- g. Nevada Business ID (provide a copy of your Nevada Business License)

2. Insurance Information

- a. Insurance Carrier
- b. Coverage Summary
- c. Coverage Limits (provide proof of insurance)

3. Organizational Information

- a. Organizational Structure (i.e. Sole Proprietor, LLC, etc.)
- b. Organizational Chart (provide this within the required documents section)
- c. Provide a list of all employees/contractors employed by your firm which your firm proposes to assign to service this contract. Complete the attached resume form for each staff listed here and place in the required documents section.

4. Technical Knowledge

- a. What knowledge does your firm possess of the railway and tourism attractions in the Virginia City and Carson City areas?
- b. What knowledge does your firm possess regarding the principles and practices of marketing, branding, advertising, public relations, and/or social media?
- c. What knowledge does your firm possess regarding Marketing/Public Relations/Communications with both public and governmental agencies?

5. Technical Abilities

- a. What abilities does your firm possess to be able to plan, organize, and direct the Marketing/Public Relations/Communications of the V&T Commission to enable it to carry out its goals and objectives?
- b. What abilities does your firm possess to be able to perform responsible administrative work in a high-profile position dealing with topics under intense public and media scrutiny and respond appropriately as situations change?
- e. What abilities does your firm possess to be able to plan, schedule, and organize all aspects of Marketing/Public Relations/Communications?

8.1.2.1

SCOPE OF WORK

The successful bidder shall fulfill the following:

Public Relations:

- Strategic planning.
- Build messaging that can be used in various channels including earned media, social media and paid traditional media to geo-target key audiences through timely/relevant channels to drive awareness, create an emotional connection and educate on key actions, and drive traffic to the website.
- Develop a social media strategy using relative platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.
- Develop and pitch storylines and press releases, fact sheets and industry highlights to the media; coordinate media interviews & press conferences.
- Support communication efforts (i.e. blog posts, eNewsletters, etc.).
- Develop and maintain targeted media lists (local, trade, national and international).
- Maintain ridership database for Virginia City Tourism Commission (VCTC), Carson City Culture & Tourism Authority (CCCTA) and the V&T Commission (V&TC).

Advertising/Marketing:

- Strategic research and plan development.
- Concept development, including quality graphic design.
- Develop original copy (text), copywriting and editing.
- Media planning & buying: media negotiations, client meetings, phone calls and correspondence related to specific media plans/buys.
- Create coordinated advertising campaigns (print, broadcast, digital, online, email, etc.) to include written plan, including objectives, audience description, strategies, tactics and budgets.
- Creative strategy and design (collaterals, reports, advertising and visual display, broadcast or social media materials).

Website development and maintenance:

- Rebuild, redesign and maintain the V&T Railroad website to include a comprehensive ticketing module, and allow for more robust data analytics.
- V&T website requirements:
 - Convert and/or redesign substantial amounts of existing content to allow for an easily integrated, seamless transition to an enhanced web site to include increasing website speed and capacity to allow for concurrent users.
 - Include an integrated ticketing module with robust data analytics. Ticketing and analytic reporting must be accessible by mobile devices 24/7.
 - Confirm audiences, objectives, graphic look and feel, navigation, site marketing, technology issues and assumptions, required functionality, phasing, and budgetary constraints, resulting in a creative brief.
 - Disclosure of web site information architecture, graphic look and feel, user navigation, home page and main navigation templates for each of the main navigation links.
 - Include the functionality to build forms (contact us, event registration, internship/apprenticeship application etc.) from within the CMS.
 - Use responsive design with the latest technologies to provide a consistent user interface across all devices, including App development – both Android and IOS.
 - Reporting capabilities – site visitor interaction and engagement.
 - Allow visitors to sign up for email newsletters, using opt-in and opt out procedures.
- Support internal staff in use of web-based content management system (CMS) to update content using tools and templates.
- Provide site log reports to help measure and understand visitor behavior in order to improve web site performance and availability; including, but not limited to: Web traffic analysis - Path analysis - Visitor trends - Page views.

Account Management & Reporting:

- Meet with VCTC and CCCTA staff as needed for the purposes of carrying out initiatives.
- Maintain internal procedures that ensure budget control, prompt billing and quality control, including but not limited to auditing invoices for space, time, preparation and services.
- Prepare cost schedules and project sheets for advertising expenditures and other related costs and secure the approval from V&T Commission and/or V&T Manager for all expenditures with regard to authorized advertising by submitting preproduction estimates.
- Assign and aid in the prosecution, application, registration, and defense of all applicable intellectual property.

- Provide weekly status reports, or as otherwise requested, to the V&T Manager updating the progress of all projects.
- Provide monthly, quarterly and annual performance cost analysis for investment.
- Develop analytical data reports and KPI's in collaboration with V&T Commission and/or V&T Manager to measure overall effectiveness and performance, and provide detailed reports monthly. It should be noted that strategic plans, creative strategies and other strategic input will come in large part from the V&T Commission and/or V&T Manager in coordination with the selected Firm(s). In addition, the Firm(s) should be able to recommend strategies to expand the impact of advertising/marketing campaigns allowing for the broadest possible exposure to the target audiences within the available budget. The selected Firm(s) must provide creative briefs before each campaign or individual project outlining the goals(s), objectives, audience, strategies, budget and measurement. The selected Firm(s) must demonstrate ability to strategically plan, integrate, manage and execute an assortment of marketing projects. New and emerging technology opportunities are consistently being introduced and the selected Firm(s) must be able to identify, evaluate, recommend, develop and execute, and/or manage the execution of these opportunities.